



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

TO THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Your Auxiliary and Legislation

THE HISTORY of the Woman's Auxiliary to the California Medical Association shows an interest in legislation from the very beginning of the organization. Some years have found the Auxiliary more interested than others due to the necessities of the day. However, we now find there is something always taking the headlines for the legislative chairman to pursue. Today even the smallest Auxiliary is sure to have some form of legislation affecting it. We have come to know that we have to be alert on the local, city or county, state, and finally the national level in all fields of legislation affecting the public health and organized medicine.

We use various means to inform our membership about legislation. We have study groups, newsletters and a brief report to the membership at a general meeting.

We receive our information from your association and the parent organization, the American Medical Association. When a call comes from your organization asking for our help, we contact the county legislative chairman, and she in turn contacts the local membership. Because we have studied and informed ourselves, we are able to act.

Is there a medical vote?

News media today often headline a labor vote or some other voting bloc. When a piece of legislation is of interest to organized medicine, it is headlined "American Medical Association 'sponsors' or 'against.'" That applies equally to the California Medical Association and the county societies. That headline is You! Instead of the home town paper saying Doctor Doe is for or against, the headline is "organized medicine," meaning the A.M.A. or C.M.A.

When a legislator is asked by a physician to vote on a piece of legislation, the legislator often thinks that maybe one or two physicians "back home" are all that are interested in this piece of legislation.

Of course physicians do not vote as a bloc, but in most matters affecting the practice of medicine, physicians usually are pretty much of one mind.

Does the legislator know what the medical vote is?

Many political analysts believe that two per cent of the vote can turn the tide in an election. As a case in point, California in the last June primary had 5,437,403 registered Democratic and Republican voters. Two per cent of that is 108,748. Hence, for physicians and their wives to swing an election statewide, they would need to influence 108,748 votes. The combined membership of the C.M.A. and the Auxiliary is about 22,000. If every member of the California Medical Association and every Auxiliary member influenced five people on election day, that would be 110,000 or more than the two per cent which can turn the tide in an election. This may appear to be dreaming, but surely one well-informed, active person can influence five people. Actually, the potential is more. So when next you or I speak to Senator Doakes or Congressman Doe, we have a potential with which to impress him.

No other profession has been maligned and attacked more than the medical profession has been from time to time. Perhaps the anonymity in public affairs that the ethics of the medical profession instills into the individual physician has contributed to this situation. Hence, only in unity and by speaking collectively can organized medicine meet the challenge that confronts it.

We of the Auxiliary have the same aims you have. We have the opportunity to let our light shine in the day-to-day contacts we have. Is your wife a member of the Auxiliary? If she is not, she and you are missing a great opportunity to be informed on matters of vital concern to your profession. In an atmosphere of comradeship and friendship she can learn of the issues affecting medicine. She can be your ambassador of good will.

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Legislation Chairman